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VI. SUMMARY AND METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

WAS CAYUÁ ACCULTURATION GRADUAL AND PACIFIC?

A SUMMARY of the acculturation of the Cayuá of Brazil could scarcely fail to point out that these people have not been completely displaced territorially, although they have been located on rather small reservations; nor have they been uprooted culturally, though their sociocultural character has undergone considerable change over several centuries. The local groups of the tribe still live a way of life which presents a picture both of organization and of notable continuity with the aboriginal past. Unfortunately, however, no close comparison of the degree of organization of the modern culture and the aboriginal Cayuá can be made. Such a comparison would justify us in concluding more about the overall effect of acculturation. Nonetheless, it is clear that the Cayuá local groups have not been broken but in fact demonstrate much cohesion.

The Cayuá have not been obliged to turn to some alien economy for their mainstay but for the most part only to modify the relationship among different components of the aboriginal economy. Providentially this was possible with a minimum of stress through adopting white technological traits, principally several metal cutting tools of great agricultural utility. Other than that shift, which was one of degree rather than of kind, the major economic novelty has been agricultural and extractive wage-work for the settler. Even this, however, is limited in its effect. The full list of acculturational changes of the Cayuá is longer, as anyone who has followed the discussion this far will recognise, but those just mentioned include most of the factors of the primary list in the analysis.

Yet it would be easy to be wrong, in casting up an idea of the whole of Cayuá acculturation, if one were to conclude from the present cultural adjustment that the course of change in the past was unmarked by stormier times. The possibility of error is greater the less detail there is of the history of Cayuá contact with whites, and this sort of knowledge is distinctly limited. There are only one or two hints, which unavoidably remain unelaborated, of earlier significant acculturational difficulties. One is the fact that Cayuá migrations of a messianic order took place in the early middle 19th century (see pp. 51–54), and these migrations likely were connected with disturbing influences of white contact. The other hint is less certain and one for which no confirmation was found, that the birth rate of at least some groups of Cayuá was dropping dangerously at one time. Allegedly this went on until it reached such a point that the people themselves became concerned, whereupon they took deliberate steps to correct the situation. According to a local white woman, these steps included public exhortation of the women against the use of contraceptives

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and abortives, apparently with favorable results. This story may be without any foundation whatsoever—and probably is not literally true at best. But it is just possible that conditions existed at one time in Cayuá history which gave rise to such a truncated and apocryphal tale. It is our very uncertainty in this respect that urges the present caution against predicating much about earlier difficulties and disorganization in the history of Cayuá acculturation. Thus, though the modern Cayuá of Brazil appear to have emerged from their past with a relatively good adjustment of means and ends, this alone does not preclude the chance that the process was at other times more painful.

The primary factors of change mentioned above indeed do not seem sweeping or radical, and the present organization of the Cayuá suggests a tranquil acculturational adjustment; but a confrontation of secondary changes, nonetheless, makes the suggestion of earlier periods of stress appear at least a possibility. The scope of these changes is unmistakable. The secondary effects can be summarized for consideration here without tiresome repetition by considering them from the angle of the changing Cayuá concept of goods. This approach, in fact, might have been adopted before as a means of bringing out important changes and relationships, but it is characteristic of much of present social science analysis that what has been accomplished in one particular manner may equally well be achieved by another. Apparently, there is often no necessary or "natural" mode of treatment or point of departure: any one of a number will serve. In any case, the changing Cayuá concept of goods and its ramifications provides a sufficient key to how far the culture as a whole has changed from the aboriginal and a key for understanding the change.

The first question is: What at present constitute "goods" for the Cayuá? What items does this category include? Here, of course, we find numerous changes, both additions, such as trade goods, and displacements, such as certain types of aboriginal manufactures. If we also consider frequency of use, occurrence, and general significance of goods, more differences between aboriginal and modern goods are seen. Many old items which would still have to be listed as goods, since they are still recognised, are of such rare occurrence and small use as to be radically in contrast with the conditions of the past. Pottery or certain hunting products illustrate this. On the other hand, a number of innovations are of first rate importance, such as metal tools. The point could be elaborated further, each succeeding elaboration only serving to emphasize greater differences.

The second question: What is done to produce or obtain the various goods at present recognised? again reveals certain contrasts of degree and kind with the past. Wage-work, money purchase, and barter are all either relatively or absolutely different from the past as means of obtaining goods. Obviously certain technological operations are also different, even in the more traditional lines of activity, such as agriculture. Far-reaching differences are implied in